

# Impact of bullying and interventions



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## I. Introduction

Harassment and bullying in schools is not given the attention that is needed to correct the problem. In the article, *Low-Level Violence, A Neglected Aspect of School Culture*, David Dupper and Nancy Meyer-Adams bring attention to the issues that students face due to bullying and harassment. In this essay, I will aim to demonstrate the different types of bullying, the impact it has on students and steps that can be taken to implement change within schools to correct these deviant behaviors.

## II. Bullying in Schools

Bullying in schools is a form of harassment that includes psychological and physical deviant behaviors towards other students. Some forms of this bullying include social, physical, cyber and verbal abuse. According to the article, *A Neglected Aspect of School Culture*, there are different reasons for students being harassed by other students. For females this can be because they are “pretty enough”, or they are not dressed in the style of clothes that is currently the trending fashion. For boys there can also be multiple reasons for peer harassment such as, not being a part of a sports team and not having certain strengths that other male students may have.

## III. Other Forms of Harassment

Bullying can take on different forms of harassment that is not always by fellow students. Peer sexual harassment is another issue that students face this form of harassment is mostly directed to the female student. Unwanted

sexual comments, spreading rumors, grabbing a student, sexual jokes and gestures are some of the common forms of sexual harassment. Moreover, these actions can make a student self-conscious, uncomfortable and embarrassed, and not want to attend classes. A bigger issue with peer sexual harassment is that many students that are perpetuating these acts feel that they are not doing anything wrong, that it is a part of “ school life”. Another disturbing issue is that there are teachers and personnel who witness these acts and yet they do nothing to reprimand the students that are partaking in these deviant acts.

Another form of bullying can be directly attributed from teachers. This is a psychological form of abuse; however, it has been taken to physical levels as well. Teachers are in a position of authority and sometimes that authority role has taken advantage of by the teacher. There have been incidences of teachers mistreating students by using fear mongering tactics that include yelling, threatening, and embarrassing students in front of others. In addition, there are some cases where teachers also physically battered students by hitting them or grabbing them forcefully.

The sexual orientation of students seems to be one of the prime targets of harassment by fellow peers. A student who is gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender often are targets of homophobic fears of others. There is often physical and verbal out lashes towards these students, and often teachers and faculty do nothing to intervene or protect the victims in these situations. According to the reading, many times teachers, guidance counselors harbor the same feelings and may also act out on these feelings in the same manner as the students perpetrating these acts.

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Religious, cultural and racial bullying are also forms of harassment seen in schools. Students that do not share the same dominant religious ideologies can be targeted and ridiculed by other peers and persons of authority. Additionally, cultural differences are also a problem for students. Students and teachers who believe that the culture of others is perhaps weird or wrong are looking at it from a perspective of ethnocentrism. Furthermore, racism is also a part of bullying. Individuals who see someone that does not share the same skin color or has dissimilar features and reflect these notions onto other students is racial intimidation.

## VI. How Does Harassment Affect Students

Students are affected in numerous ways due to low-level violence. In some cases, harassment can cause a student to take their own life, in other cases these victims can be pushed so far that they retaliate and cause extreme harm upon others. Although taking their own life or inflicting harm on others may be extreme, they still in fact happen. However, there are less extreme implications that are much more common for victims of bullying. Some of these effects may shape the rest of their lives, such as low-self-esteem and students dropping out of school. Additionally, students that are harassed may withdraw from their studies and feel isolated from social activities. This in effect hurts student's outcomes on their grades as well as their overall experiences both socially and academically. Hazler (1994) stated that:

[T]heir grades may suffer because their attention is being drawn away from learning. Being repeatedly victimized may push even “good kids” to extremes, such as starting fights or bringing weapons to school to exact

vengeance on their tormentors, [and] even students and adults who are witnesses are affected [in that] they must deal with the lowered self-esteem and loss of control that accompanies feeling unsafe and unable to take action. The result is children and adults who do all they can to avoid recognizing when someone else is being hurt.

#### V. How to Implement Change

There are a number of ways to implement change within the school systems. One way is for parents, teachers and faculty members to not tolerate these types of behaviors. When they witness an individual bullying or harassing a student they should intervene and take the appropriate actions to stop this from reoccurring. In addition, teachers and faculty members should attend workshops that are properly educating professionals on how to deescalate and handle these situations. Overall, the change must come from the culture within the school, in order to achieve this, school should embrace and promote diversity, positive reinforcements and a no tolerance approach towards individuals who choose to perpetuate acts of bullying and harassment.

#### VI. Conclusion

Bullying and harassment is a growing problem within schools that is not being addressed properly. Students are not the only ones that are perpetrating these acts, school faculty are sometimes also ones that are guilty of these behaviors. The victims of low-level-violence are often faced with negative and lifelong impacts including low-self-esteem and sometimes victims seek out retaliation against their perpetrators. There are ways to

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implement change and create a diverse atmosphere for schools but certain guidelines, techniques and procedures need to be put in place for faculty and teachers.

## **References**

David R. Dupper, Nancy Meyer-Adams. “ Low-Level Violence, A Neglected Aspect of School Culture.” Jeanne H. Ballantine, Joan Z. Spade. *Schools and Society* . Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 2015. 200-208. Print.